Retired Public Employees Association

Representing the interests of 500,000 New York state and local government retirees

165 Jordan Road • Troy, NY 12180 • (518) 869-2542 • mail@rpea.org

Updated Executive Budget and Retiree Priorities

- **Call Script:** "I'm a constituent and retiree calling to thank the Legislature for listening to our concerns, and to demand that the final state budget protects IRMAA, secures skilled nursing benefits, and raises the earnings cap."

Primary Issue: Defeating the IRMAA Cut in the Final Budget

- **The Status:** The Governor's proposal to eliminate the IRMAA reimbursement was successfully omitted from the Senate and Assembly one-house budget bills. We must ensure it does not sneak back into the final enacted budget.
- **The Threat:** Eliminating IRMAA reimbursement raises health care costs immediately and permanently for retirees. Retirees would pay higher Medicare premiums starting January 1, 2026.
- **The Reality:** Retirees can be pulled into IRMAA due to inflation, required minimum distributions, or one-time income events, not because they are receiving higher pensions.

Securing Our Legislative Victories

- **Protecting Skilled Nursing Benefits (Part UU):** The Senate bill included critical language ensuring no reduction of benefits for skilled nursing care when retirees become eligible for Medicare. Medicare-primary NYSHIP retirees should have the same access to skilled nursing care as others. We must push to keep Part UU in the final agreement.
- **Raising the Pension Earnings Cap (Part TT):** The Senate bill increases the pension earnings limitation to $50,000 effective this year. Retirees should be able to return to work without unnecessary penalties, especially during workforce shortages. This must be enacted in the final budget.

Ongoing Retiree Priorities

- **COLA:** Retiree COLA needs to be updated. Current COLAs have fallen far behind inflation, reducing purchasing power year after year. We are building a broader coalition to pass a viable COLA bill.
- **Pension Protection:** Pension protections must remain strong. The State Comptroller's role as sole trustee of the Pension Fund is critical to protecting retiree benefits.
- **Closing Reminder:** "Please let the Senator/Assemblymember know retirees in the district are paying close attention to these issues."